

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**House on Wagstaff Farm**

Roxboro vicinity, Person County, PR0295, Listed 4/5/2006

Nomination by Laura A. W. Phillips

Photographs by Laura A. W. Phillips, December 2004



Front and side view



Rear view

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name House on Wagstaff Farm

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number NE side NC 57, 1.4 mile NW of junction with SR 1300

N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Roxboro

☒ vicinity

state North Carolina

code NC

county Person

code 145

Zip code 27343

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey A. Crow SHPD 2/17/06  
Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

House on Wagstaff Farm

Name of Property

Person County, NC

County and State

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

N/A

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Georgian

Federal

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Weatherboard

roof Metal

other Stone

Brick

Wood

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark 'x' in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Architecture****Period of Significance**

First quarter of nineteenth century

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

House on Wagstaff Farm

Name of Property

Person County, NC

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property Approx. 10**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	671920	4036920
Zone	Easting	North	ing
2	17	672180	4036800

3	17	672170	4036620
Zone	Easting	North	ing
4	17	671940	4036720

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historianorganization N/Adate August 1, 2005street & number 637 N. Spring Streettelephone 336/727-1968City or town Winston-Salemstate NCZip code 27101**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Wagstaff Associates c/o John H. Wagstaffstreet & number 31 Reams Avenuetelephone 336/597-2422City or town Roxborostate NCZip code 27573

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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House on Wagstaff Farm  
Person County, North Carolina

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Setting and Summary

The House on Wagstaff Farm is located on the north side of NC 57 (Semora Road) in rural northwestern Person County approximately five miles south of the Virginia state line in North Carolina's north central Piedmont region. North of the county seat town of Roxboro, the house stands less than a mile and a half northwest of the crossroads at Concord Methodist Church and a half mile east of South Hyco Creek, which flows northward into nearby Hyco Lake. Set back from the road on an open tract of approximately ten acres, the house faces south from its vantage point on a hillock surrounded by pastures and seasonal agricultural fields (photo A). Downhill and immediately west of the house is a small pond, and farther west at the edge of the nominated property are a log tobacco barn of undetermined date and a frame corral used for herding cattle. The nominated property is bounded on the north by a Carolina Power and Light power line, on the east by a wooded area, on the south by NC 57, and on the west by a gently curving farm lane that leads north from the road. Southwest of the property, across NC 57, is Woodland Elementary School, the only break in the agrarian tranquility of the place (site plan).

The early-nineteenth-century house is a one-story-with-attic, single-pile, frame dwelling measuring approximately thirty-two feet wide and eighteen-and-a-half feet deep with a small, original pent room projecting from the main body of the house at the east end adjacent to the chimney. Set on a fieldstone foundation, the weatherboarded house has a metal-sheathed, side-gable roof with exterior-end rubble-stone chimneys with brick stacks. A ca. 1920 porch carries across the entrance and flanking windows of the three-bay facade, while a shed room of the same date covers the east two thirds of the rear of the house. The interior follows a hall-and-parlor plan and retains much transitional Georgian-Federal-style detailing.

#### Exterior

The house's heavy-timber-frame construction rests on a full fieldstone foundation (some of which has collapsed) and has sills measuring approximately ten-by-ten inches and cornerposts that are nearly that large. At each corner, the vertical corner post and the side and gable-end sills interlock with mortise-and-tenon joints (photo G).

Worn weatherboard siding—which appears to date from the late nineteenth century—currently sheathes the house, but surviving molded weatherboards at the rear of the house and around the east chimney and pent room reveal the original siding type. The steep side-gable roof, covered with 5-V agricultural metal, has boxed and molded front and rear cornices with fragments of shaped end boards.

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A rubble-stone chimney rises at each gable end. The west chimney is single-shouldered, while the east chimney, serving fireplaces on both stories, is double-shouldered. Each has a free-standing brick stack. The two types of corbeled chimney caps suggest different dates of stack construction. Although these dates are not known, both stacks appear to be early.

No original window sash remain, although most portions of the original molded window casings, while worn, survive. The two facade windows and the rear window near the west end of the house are filled with twentieth-century sash of varying configurations. The other window openings are empty. Exterior doors, located at the center of the facade and on the east elevation in front (south) of the chimney, are twentieth-century replacements with five horizontal panels.

The plain and deteriorated front porch (photo D) features a shed roof covered with 5-V agricultural metal, irregularly spaced two-by-four posts, a largely missing wood floor, and a stone perimeter base. At the rear of the house, the large, weatherboarded shed room has a 5-V agricultural metal roof and rests on a stone pier foundation. The shed room has a single six-light sash centered on the rear elevation, a vacant window on each of the two side elevations, and an exterior twentieth-century batten door at the east end adjacent to the rear of the main body of the house (photo E).

### Interior

The interior of the hall-and-parlor-plan house uses cut nails and mostly pine woodwork. The larger, west, hall room is nearly square, measuring approximately seventeen feet wide and seventeen-and-a-half feet deep. The smaller east parlor also measures approximately seventeen-and-a-half feet deep, but is a little less than thirteen-and-a-half feet wide. The pent room located north of the parlor fireplace is three feet wide (east to west) and nearly six feet deep (north to south). The rear shed room, added ca. 1920, constitutes the only modification to the original plan of the house. When it was added, the rear door of the hall that stood opposite the front door was removed and the opening enclosed, and the rear window of the parlor, opposite the front window, was cut to the floor and filled by a new batten door to the shed room (floor plan).

Although the interior of the original house has lost some of its transitional Georgian-Federal detailing, many original features remain. Lost are sections of the molded window surrounds, the door between the hall and parlor (now a five-panel door matching the front door), and the parlor mantel (the shell of which is in storage with an ogee bed mold for the shelf being the only surviving original decorative detail). On the first story, tongue-and-groove boarding from the 1920s overlays earlier flooring. The ceilings—approximately twelve feet high in the two main rooms—are covered with hand-planed, flush-sheathed boards. Three-foot-high hand-planed wainscots surround both the hall and the parlor (photos H, J). On each wall, the wainscot's center flat panel is composed of a single, long, wide board surrounded by an ovolo molding. Above the wainscot, the walls are currently covered with beaded



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House on Wagstaff Farm  
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boarding contemporary with the shed addition and the porch. However, physical evidence shows that originally the upper walls were plastered. The woodwork molding of the door and window surrounds is integral to those structural elements.

In the parlor, the mantel has been lost, but the segmental-arched firebox remains. The pent room north of the parlor fireplace is entered by an original six-panel door with a molded surround. The tiny storage room is ceiled with flush sheathing, and the east wall has a small window. Behind the parlor, the walls and ceiling of the shed room, which sags in the middle, are sheathed with beaded boards. The south two thirds of the ceiling is flat, but the remaining north third slopes downward with the roof (photo K).

The fireplace in the hall—the main first-floor room—is the focal point of that room (photo H). Set around a segmental-arched firebox, the mantel is large, with a molded surround, a four-panel frieze, and a heavily molded shelf. A partially enclosed winder stair in the northwest corner of the hall leads to the attic. Its open section along the north wall features a flush-sheathed closed string and spandrel outlined with a molded edge, square-in-section balusters set in a heavily molded base and hand rail, and an octagonal, chamfered newel with an octagonal cap (photos H, I). A batten door at the head of the stair's north run appears to be an early addition. Beneath the stair, a six-paneled door opens to a closet with two rounded shelves, one of which appears to be original (photo H).

The west, enclosed, run of the stair with diagonal board sheathing rises to the attic, which is finished with detailing as stylish as that found on the first floor. The railing and newel at the top of the stair repeat the detailing of the first-floor section of the stair, except that the balusters are set to appear diamond-shaped rather than square in section (photo L). The attic is divided by a partition into two rooms that correspond in size to the first-floor rooms (floor plan). The six-panel partition door has a molded casing and double-strap wrought-iron hinges, although there are ghost marks of H-and-L hinges. The attic rooms retain original random-width flooring, north- and south-side knee walls, inward-sloping upper walls, and narrow, flat ceilings, all of which are ceiled with wide, hand-planed, flush-board, white-washed sheathing (photo M). In the attic's west room, a batten door (now detached but still in the attic) on each knee wall opens to storage space between the extended attic floor and the slope of the roof. The east and west end walls of the attic each have two windows. On the east end wall of the attic's east room is a small fireplace with a segmental-arched opening. The tall, narrow mantel is similar to the hall mantel, but simpler, and has a frieze with three vertical panels (photo N). When the flanking windows were enlarged in the mid-twentieth century, the new frames cut into the sides of the mantel.

### Outbuildings

A tobacco barn—a noncontributing building within this nomination because it was not built during the house's period of significance—stands at the west edge of the property. Built of diamond-



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notched logs with chinking, the tall, windowless building has a metal-covered gable roof with weatherboarded gable ends. The west side of the barn has a batten door. Metal-sheathed pent roofs supported on wood struts at varying heights protect the walls on all four sides. An added metal shed projects from the south side of the barn (photo O). The tobacco barn was probably built during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Immediately north of the tobacco barn is the cattle corral. Its fence-like construction consists of heavy wood posts with horizontal board rails. At the southwest corner is an inclined cattle chute (photo O). Probably built during the mid-to-late-twentieth century, the corral is a noncontributing structure.

### Integrity Statement

During the nearly two-century history of the House on Wagstaff Farm, the dwelling has undergone several, mostly ca. 1920, alterations, as discussed in the preceding description, and it has stood vacant for many years. Nevertheless, it still conveys to a remarkable degree its original construction, plan, and details of transitional Georgian-Federal styling that date from its early-nineteenth-century construction. It also retains its agrarian rural setting. Thus, the house can be said to possess historic integrity in terms of its location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The current condition of the house ranges from fair to good. The owners plan to restore it to its original appearance.

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House on Wagstaff Farm  
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### SIGNIFICANCE

#### Summary

The House on Wagstaff Farm is located in the gently rolling hills of northwestern Person County in North Carolina's north-central Piedmont region near the Virginia border. Historically and currently an agrarian county, Person County's domestic landscape is dominated by farmhouses. Although white settlement in the area began in the mid-eighteenth century, no houses survive from that period and few houses survive from the first several decades after the county's establishment in 1791. The period saw the construction of several large and highly sophisticated houses, but much more common were the one-story-with-attic frame houses with a combination of Georgian- and Federal-style characteristics that were the homes of the solid, but smaller-scale farmers who dominated the population.

The House on Wagstaff Farm is locally significant because it is an excellent and increasingly rare example of the small group of houses of this type in Person County. Like the other surviving houses, the House on Wagstaff Farm has had alterations and suffers some deterioration. However, its form and plan, as well as numerous original features, remain intact. The one-story-with-attic, heavy-timber-frame house has a steep gable roof and gable-end stone chimneys with brick stacks. It follows a hall-and-parlor plan with a typical exterior side door in front (south) of the parlor chimney and a once-common but now rare pent room north of the parlor chimney. Among original interior features of significance are six-panel doors, wainscots in the hall and parlor, a large and heavily molded hall mantel with a paneled frieze, and a partially open corner stair with molded handrail and spandrel, an unusual octagonal newel, and an under-stair closet with some original shelving. Of added significance is the two-room attic, which is surprisingly sophisticated and intact. It features a stair rail and newel that repeat, with minor differences, those on the first floor; white-washed, wide-flush-board wall and ceiling sheathing; and a tall mantel with a paneled frieze.

Because the nineteenth-century history of the House on Wagstaff Farm remains unclear and, therefore, an historical name cannot be attributed to it with certainty, it has been named to reflect its present situation. Nevertheless, the house is highly significant architecturally in Person County and therefore fulfills Criterion C for listing in the National Register. Its period of significance is the first quarter of the nineteenth century, which, based on its telling architectural characteristics, was the time of its construction.

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### Historical Background

#### General History

Located in North Carolina's north-central Piedmont, Person County covers approximately 400 square miles. It is bordered on the north by the state of Virginia, on the east by Granville County, on the south by Durham and Orange counties, and on the west by Caswell County. The northwestern section of the county, in which the House on Wagstaff Farm is located, has gently rolling hills and is dominated by the Hyco Lake Reservoir, created by Carolina Power and Light Company in 1962 at the confluence of North Hyco, South Hyco, and Cobbs creeks (Wright, xvii; Eaker, 41).

Formed out of the eastern section of Caswell County in 1791, Person County was named for Revolutionary leader Thomas Person (1733-1800), whose Goshen plantation stood to the east in Granville County. Settlement of the area had begun in the mid-eighteenth century, with most immigrants coming from Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Early settlers consisted primarily of small landholders with an average of 150 acres and few slaves. Although over time some county land owners developed plantations with hundreds of acres and numerous slaves, most inhabitants continued to engage in small-scale farming (Wright, 8, 24).

During the first several decades of the nineteenth century, agriculture remained the primary occupation in Person County; in 1820, ninety-four percent of the county's households were engaged in farming. Although most Person County farmers operated at the subsistence level, the first quarter of the century saw the rise of tobacco as the staple cash crop in Person County, as in the other principal tobacco-growing North Carolina counties—Rockingham, Caswell, Granville, and Warren—along the Virginia border. Secondary crops included corn and various grains, and the raising of livestock also played an important role in the local agricultural economy. The closest markets to farmers in northern Person County were nearby Milton in Caswell County and towns across the border in Virginia (Wright, 16, 21, 53, 58-59). Thus, social and economic ties with that state remained strong, and architecture in Virginia exerted a strong influence on the form and styling of houses erected in Person County (Person County Inventory, 22-1).

As elsewhere in North Carolina, the 1830s brought a large wave of emigration from Person County to new states and territories to the west. From 1830 to 1840, the county's population dropped nearly thirty percent. The tide of emigration continued during the 1840s and 1850s. However, many planters who stayed behind profited from the exodus by increasing their acreage at "moving sale" prices. By 1860 nearly half the farms in Person County contained from 100 to 500 acres (Wright, 60, 64, 66, 81).

Then came the Civil War and the changes to the agricultural labor force that followed. In Person County, as well as elsewhere in North Carolina, a system of tenancy developed, with sharecroppers far

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outnumbering cash tenants. As the large farms and plantations broke up after the war, the number of farms increased throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century while, conversely, the average acreage of farms decreased during the same period. The number of farm owners increased, but the number and percentage of tenants increased at an even greater rate (Lefler and Newsome, 522). As a result of these changes, many of the smaller, older farm houses in the county came to be occupied by tenants rather than owners.

It was into this milieu that the House on Wagstaff Farm was built and evolved in use.

### Property History

The second half of the ownership history of the House on Wagstaff Farm is known with certainty. However, because of the large amounts of shifting acreage involved and the paucity of both ownership references and geographic descriptors in the legal documents involved, the first half of the house's history can only be surmised. Thus, no attempt has been made to assign an historic name to the property, and it is called, for the purposes of this nomination, by the name that describes its present situation.

Since 1994, the house has been part of an approximately 600-acre tract owned and farmed by Wagstaff Associates, consisting of brothers Lindsay T. Wagstaff Jr. and John H. Wagstaff (Deed Book 236, p. 346). The Wagstaff brothers acquired the land in two separate transactions: a half interest from their parents, Lindsay T. and Sulou J. Wagstaff, in 1994 and a half interest from their uncle, Kenneth C. Wagstaff, in 1982 (Deed Book 236, p. 344; Deed Book 172, p. 727). Lindsay T. and Kenneth C. Wagstaff received the 600-acre tract as a gift from their aunt and uncle, Ruth Hester Satterfield and J. Burton Satterfield, in 1964. The property constituted all the land in Cunningham Township owned by Ruth Hester Satterfield at that time (Deed Book 101, p. 160). Ruth Hester (later Satterfield) inherited the land from her father, John Holeman Hester, upon his death in 1936. In his will it was described as "all the lands I own on the East side of South Hyco Creek in Cunningham Township." John H. Hester also owned considerable additional property, some of which was on the west side of South Hyco Creek (Will Book 21, p. 375).

It has been the Wagstaff family tradition that John Hester received the property from the estate of his father, Andrew Jackson Hester (1835-1912). This is likely the case, as none of John Hester's land purchases seem to be this property. However, A. J. Hester's 1908 will makes no mention of specific property, and he owned considerable land in Person County, purchased between 1870 and 1898. Other than \$3,000 left to his son, Brice H. Hester, the remainder of his estate, both real and personal, was to be sold, publicly or privately, or divided equally among his children, which included John H. Hester. Estate records for A. J. Hester appear not to have been recorded, so it can only be assumed that the tract on which the House on Wagstaff Farm stands became the property of John Hester as part of the settlement

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of the estate (Will Book 20, p. 239).

From this point back, the history of the house is only “informed” supposition, combining family beliefs with current deed research to develop a likely scenario for the chain of title. Current owner (with his brother) John Wagstaff asserts that no members of the Wagstaff or Hester families ever lived in the house. Family tradition suggests that A. J. Hester purchased the property rather than inheriting it (Wagstaff Interview). The will of A. J. Hester’s father, Robert H. Hester (1811-1880) was checked in an attempt to verify that Andrew J. Hester did not, in fact, receive the property through this means. The will gives no suggestion that Andrew got the tract from his father’s estate (Will Book 19, p. 107). There is also a family story that A. J. Hester purchased the property to get it back into his daughter-in-law’s family (Wagstaff Interview). One of his daughters-in-law was Josephine Thompson, wife of John Holeman Hester (Eaker, 262). With these suggestions in mind, deeds to Andrew J. Hester were searched.

In 1879 A. J. Hester purchased 142 ½ acres from Joseph J. Jones. The tract was described as the “land on which William H. Sally now resides,” suggesting that the land was occupied by a tenant, rather than the owner, a common situation during that period in Person County’s—and North Carolina’s—history (Deed Book CC, p. 432). Jones purchased the property, described as 143 ½ acres on the waters of South Hyco on the road from Red House (Semora) to Roxboro, from Joseph S. Thompson (probably the father or grandfather of Josephine Thompson Hester) in 1869 (Deed Book T, p. 351). Thompson had purchased 100 acres on the waters of South Hyco from Jacob Thomas in 1851 (Deed Book W, p. 56). Jacob Thomas, in turn, had acquired 110 acres on both sides of the South Hyco from his father, John Thomas, in 1798. In that deed, the elder Thomas sold the property to his son for 100 pounds Virginia money “and more especially for the natural affection and love that I bear to my son Jacob Thomas” (Deed Book C, p. 30). If, in fact, this is the correct chain of title for the property on which the House on Wagstaff Farm stands, it is probable that Jacob Thomas, owner from 1798 to 1851, built the house. However, this scenario remains unproven.

### Architecture Context

Few structures remain from Person County’s early years. The Stephen Moore House and the Holloway-Walker House (NR 1982), date or appear to date from the late-eighteenth century, but both took on significantly different characters in the mid- or late-nineteenth century. Only one house in the county is an exceptional example of the early-nineteenth-century Federal style. Waverly (NR 1974), constructed between 1825 and 1835 along the Virginia border, is a sophisticated, two-story frame house with a side-hall plan and elaborate Adamesque detail (Bishir and Southern, 179; Person County Inventory, 22-1, 22-2).

More common were the more modest, one-story-with-attic frame houses built during the first

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three decades of the nineteenth century that retained eighteenth-century construction techniques but exhibited a combination of vernacular Georgian- and Federal-style characteristics. Though relatively small, these sturdy, traditional houses—probably the homes of the most typical farmers in the county with small-to-middling-sized farms—often displayed relatively simple yet well-designed and consistent stylistic details. Similar to many houses built in Virginia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and to houses of the same period in neighboring Caswell and Granville counties—such as Granville’s James Blackwell House (NR 1988) and William Ellixson House (NR 1988)—these houses in Person County often had stone foundations, beaded or molded weatherboard siding, gable roofs with boxed and molded cornices, and gable-end stone or brick chimneys. The interiors of the houses usually had hall-and-parlor plans, a few with a pent room adjacent to a chimney, enclosed stairs along the center wall or in a corner, paneled doors with molded surrounds, wainscots, and plastered or flush-boarded walls and ceilings. Fireplaces were large, with segmental-arched fireboxes, and usually sported fancy, if vernacular, Georgian, Federal, or transitional mantels (Person County Inventory, 22-1, 22-2; Carlson and Brown, 178-180). The House on Wagstaff Farm is a rare survivor of this group of early houses in Person County. Although in the vernacular tradition, stylistic influences often melded together rather than being clearly separate, still, some decorative features of the interior of the House on Wagstaff Farm reflect the particular influences of the Georgian and Federal styles. For example, the profile and weight of the stair handrail are particularly Georgian, as is the bulky size of the ovolo molding found on the backbands and sticking of doors, wainscots, and mantels. On the other hand, the flat, rather than raised, panels of the doors and mantels are typical of the Federal style.

In 1975 an architectural survey of Person County was conducted as part of a study of the historic and architectural resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin. At that time, less than twenty examples of the once-typical, one-story-with-attic, transitional house type were recorded. All had seen some degree of alteration, and many were in deteriorated condition (Person County Inventory, 22-1, 22-4).

In 2005, a field check was conducted by the author of fifteen of the most characteristic of these houses to determine not only their status thirty years after the original survey, but also to ascertain the relative place of the House on Wagstaff Farm within this context. Once considered the best example of the house type in Person County, the Gates House, which stood in the Timberlake vicinity, has been moved out of the county to Hillsborough.

Another house in the group is the Stanfield House, located in the Cunningham vicinity across Hyco Lake from the House on Wagstaff Farm. It is a good example of the house type whose interior details are clearly representative of the Federal style. The well-maintained one-story-with-attic house has a stone foundation, gable-end brick chimneys, one of which is double-shouldered, a three-bay facade with a central door, and an additional door on the side elevation in front of the chimney. Behind the same chimney is a projecting alcove that may originally have been a pent room. An ell has been added to the rear. On the interior, the Standfield House has a hall-and-parlor plan, an enclosed stair along the

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interior wall, and plastered walls above the wainscot. The interior retains good Federal-style details in its wainscot, door and window surrounds, and mantels. Nevertheless, the house has been altered by the replacement of the original doors with French doors, the covering or replacement of the original beaded weatherboards with vinyl German siding, and the replacement of the nine-over-nine sash windows with black (probably metal) six-over-six sash.

Six of the fifteen houses apparently no longer stand (or else have been so altered as to be non-recognizable). Two of the houses have lost their architectural integrity through heavy remodeling or modernization. Four of the houses have continued to deteriorate beyond their already deteriorated status thirty years ago. One of these is the Annie Brooks House, located in the Concord vicinity in close proximity to the House on Wagstaff Farm. Although it retains its stone foundation and significant stone chimneys, the house is deteriorated, overgrown, and missing much of its original interior woodwork.

The last member of the group is the nominated house. It, too, has suffered some deterioration and has been subject to alterations and additions, primarily during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These include, on the exterior, replacement of the original molded weatherboards with plain weatherboards, replacement of the exterior doors, loss of the original window sash, and the addition of a front porch and a rear shed room. Still, in many ways it remains an excellent example of this early-nineteenth-century house type in Person County, probably in part because there have not been continuing alterations in more recent years. The one-story-with-attic, heavy-timber-frame house has a steep gable roof with boxed and molded front and rear cornices, stone gable-end chimneys with brick stacks, and a hall-and-parlor plan. Although the original plaster on the upper walls has been replaced with beaded boarding and the parlor mantel has been almost completely lost, numerous original interior features of significance remain. Among those on the first floor are the wainscots in the hall and parlor, the molded door and window surrounds, the pent room with original six-panel door north of the parlor chimney, the exterior door south of the parlor chimney, the heavily molded hall mantel, and the partially-enclosed stair in the northwest corner of the hall with its unusual stair rail and newel and its under-stair closet with original shelving and six-panel door. In addition, the attic has surprisingly sophisticated and unaltered details. These include an upper stair railing and newel along one side of the stair opening that nearly match those on the first floor, sloped walls and ceilings sheathed with wide flush boards that are white-washed, doors in the knee walls of the west room that provide access to storage space, a center wall with a six-panel door that divides the attic space into two rooms, and a fireplace in the east room with a tall mantel with a paneled frieze. Because the House on Wagstaff farm retains so many original defining features, it is an important and increasingly rare surviving example of this once-common house type from Person County's early decades.



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### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the bold black line on the accompanying map entitled "House on Wagstaff Farm: Tax Map/Site Map," drawn to a scale of 1"=150'. It is a portion of Parcel 3 of Person County Tax Map A15. The nominated property lies on the north side of NC 57 and is bounded on the south by that road, on the north by a Carolina Power and Light power line (one of the current property lines), on the east by a straight line that runs roughly just west of a wooded area, and on the west by a curved line along a dirt farm lane.

#### Boundary Justification

The boundary of the House on Wagstaff Farm encompasses the historic house and its immediate rural setting of approximately ten acres. The house stands on a hill near the center of the nominated property. West of the house is a farm pond; along the west boundary line are a log tobacco barn and a frame corral. Two small wooded areas lie along part of the north boundary line, and pastures and seasonal agricultural fields make up the remainder of the approximately ten acres. The nominated property was associated with the house historically and continues to convey its historic setting. Today, the nominated property is part of a farm of hundreds of acres.

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### PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs:

- 1) House on Wagstaff Farm
- 2) Roxboro vicinity, Person County, North Carolina
- 3) Laura A. W. Phillips
- 4) December 2004
- 5) North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh
- 6-7) A: Setting along NC 57, view to NW
  - 2) Setting, view to NE
  - 3) Overall of house, view to NE
  - 4) Facade, view to N
  - 5) East elevation and rear shed, view to SW
  - 6) West elevation, view to E
  - 7) Northwest corner of house, complex mortise-and-tenon framing, view to E
  - 8) Hall, view to W
  - 9) Stair detail, hall, view to SE
  - 10) Parlor, view to SW
  - 11) Shed room, view to E
  - 12) Stair rail and newel, attic, view to NW
  - 13) West room, attic, view to E
  - 14) East room, attic, view to E
  - 15) Tobacco barn and corral, view to NE